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L I V E S
O F 13
ROGER MORTIMER,
EARL of MARCH,
AND OF
ROBERT,
Earl of Oxford, &c.

Prince Ministers in the Reigns
of *Edward* the Second, and
Richard the Second.

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THE
LIVES
OF
Earl MORTIMER,
AND
Robert, Earl of Oxford, &c.

NOthing ever struck me more than a Saying of the great Duke of Rohan's; *The absolute Reign of Favourites is the Ruin of a State*: Which, however common it may appear to be, receives a Sanction from such an illustrious Pen, and obtains the Authority of a Maxim. History is full of Examples to prove it; and Historians seem to handle no Part of it with so much Pleasure as the Fall of Favourites. It would, however, be very unreasonable to deprive Princes of the Privileges of Nature; the Liberty of their Passions; and the Choice of their Friends; which has sometimes, tho' very rarely, been that of their People; as it will always be when good and wise Princes govern. How hap-

py was the *Roman Empire* in the Friendships of *Augustus*, who never hastily admitted any Man into his Favour, nor rashly discarded him afterwards? Always choosing such as were Eminent for their high Qualities in the Arts of Peace and War: And when he had chosen, he could see their Faults as well as their Merit; blaming often, as *Suetonius* tells us, *Agrippa*, for his want of Patience, and *Mecænas* for his want of Taciturnity. Yet where shall we find two Persons, in Ancient or Modern Story, so deserving the good Graces of their Sovereign? Whose Wisdom was the more conspicuous for that of his Friends. The Valour and Victories of the one; the Zeal and Politeness of the other; The Moderation and Humanity of both, were not some of the least Blessings of that Reign; the happiest the *Romans* ever liv'd under.

By this Instance 'tis evident, Favourites may be the Cause of as much Good as Evil in a Government; and are not therefore hurtful of themselves. However, considering Princes are but Men, and as much expos'd to the Tyranny of their Passions as others; 'tis but too much to be fear'd, they will often give themselves up blindly to them, in the disposal of their Friendship, as all bad Princes are sure to do; and good Princes being much more rare than bad, ill Favourites have been so frequent, that the very Name is now become odious. We need not look farther into History, than that of *Augustus*'s immediate Successor, *Tiberius*, under whom the *Romans* began first to feel in earnest the difference between the Condition of a Free People, and that of Slaves.



The two Men who rose highest in this wicked Emperor's Favour, were *Sejanus* and *Piso*, who had neither the Vertues nor Abilities of the two former Favourites. Their Wisdom they supply'd with Craft, and their Zeal with Flattery. They study'd the Passions of their Master, and not the Interest of his Subjects. Their Fraud and Avarice were as great as their Ambition; and their Pride and Cruelty without Bounds. By these *Germanicus* and the best Men of Rome fell into Disgrace: And 'tis said of *Tiberius*, That he did not raise *Sejanus* out of any *Vit. Tib.* extraordinary Kindness for him, but to make use of him as an Instrument to destroy those he hated. But we have Examples of the same Nature, that have a nearer Relation to us. And our own Story, in the Lives of *Edward* the Second, and *Richard* the Second, furnishes us with sufficient Matter of Reflection on the Danger of ill Favourites, both to States and themselves. Reading lately Sir *Robert Howard*'s admirable *History of the Reigns* of those two Princes, I could not help dipping deeper into the Lives and Fortunes of the two Prime Ministers who then rul'd this Kingdom, and brought both Kings and People into the utmost Misery: Which, according to Sir *Robert*'s Reflections in his Preface could not be otherwise. *The parting with Power to Ministers and Favourites*, says he, ever did, and ever will, breed a distrust in the People, enough to shake all Confidence in their Prince. And 'tis but natural it should have so fatal an Operation, since the true Interest of a King differs totally from theirs. *His best and securest Happiness is founded on the Peoples Good*; their Interest and Ambition must be supply'd by their Oppression. This is the

seldom

seldom failing Cause that made all Princes unkind to their People, that invest Ministers with their Power, and Affections, and I am Confident there are but few Stories that have given an Account of a Prince so resign'd to others, but have likewise told of his Misfortune involv'd in theirs, &c.

To pursue the Order of Chronology, I shall begin this Treatise with the Life of the First Earl *Mortimer*; who, from the Quality of an ordinary Baron in *Herefordshire*, rose so high in his Queen's Favour, that it has left as great a Blot on her Memory, as his Vices have on his own.

The Name of *Mortimer* is as old in *England* as the Conquest, and so many of our Families owe their Descent to the Followers of the *Norman*, that tho' the *Era* is not very old, compar'd with the *German Genealogies*, of which we ought to be more Proud; yet the best of them think, you cannot do 'em greater Honour than to bring their Ancestors in with the Conqueror, which has occasion'd the Spoiling a great many good old *Saxon* Names, and turning them into *French*: As for Instance, if my Name was *Greenfield* 100 Years ago, and Fortune should be kinder to me than she was to my Ancestors, I would presently deduce my Origin from *Granville* in *Normandy*, and Assign the Founder of our House some Principal Post in the Bastards Army. And if I had either of the two Names which are now in my Head, how easily could I derive the one from a *Mareschal* of *France*, and the other from a First President of the Parliament of *Paris*. Tho' the one is Originally *Welch*, and the other *Saxon*: For 'tis a hard matter when a Person Arrives to exalted Stations and Dignities, if he cannot by Father's side or Mother's side, croud himself into some

some Family or other of a better Figure than his own, and by Changing a Letter or two of his Name, Entitle himself to the Honours the Herald finds out for him. Which puts me in mind of a Passage in *la Bruyere*, in the Chapter of *Certain Customs*: *I here declare it openly*, says he, *and desire all Men to take notice of it*, that one may wonder hereafter, if ever any great Man thinks me Worthy of his Care, if ever I happen to make my Fortune, there is one Godfrey de la Bruyere, whom all the Chronicles of France place among the Men of the Highest Rank, that follow'd Godfry de Bouillon in his Conquest of the Holy Land: And this Godfrey shall then be the Man from whom I am descended in a Direct Line. By the same means all the Mortimers in England, from the Cobler to the Count, if we had one of that Name, might pretend to be descended from Him who came in with William the First, and claim an Alliance with the Dukes of Mortimer in France: I take the Liberty to digress, that being allowable in writing Lives, which would be an Offence to the Severity of General History. 'Tis certain there were many Considerable Persons of the Family of Mortimer, before Edmund and Roger, in the Reign of Edward the First, Father and Uncle to Roger Mortimer, whose Life I have undertaken to Write, and his Descent by the Father's side, being more Honourable than that by the Mother, I shall take my Choice as others have done on other Occasions, and Speak only of that which I like best. He was the Son of Edmund Mortimer, and Born in the Year 1285, the Fourteenth of Edward the First; He was in the Seventeenth Year of his Age when his Father Dy'd.

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The King, according to the Royal Prerogative at that time, gave the Wardship of the young Lord *Roger Mortimer* to *Pierce Gaveston*, who was a Companion of his Son *Edward*, Prince of *Wales*; and being highly belov'd by him, was favour'd by the Father, till he perceiv'd *Gaveston* corrupted the young Prince's Manners, putting him on many Extravagances, Debau-cheries and Riots; of which, one was the break-ing into the Lord Treasurer, the Bishop of *Che-ster's*, Park: This was intolerable, in times when the Temporals of the Clergy were Sacred; and the King was so enrag'd, that he imprison'd the Prince, and banish'd *Gaveston*; who, before his Exile, granted *Roger Mortimer* his Ward-Liberty to marry whom he pleas'd; and freed him from his Wardship for 2000 Marks. Not long after he took to Wife *Joan*, the Daughter of *Peter de Genevile*, Son of *Jeffery de Genevile*, Lord of *Trim* in *Ireland*.

Mortimer was one of the most Gallant Noblemen of his time; and it cannot be doubted, but the Court was the Scene of his Youth, as well as riper Years. He was in his Eighteenth Year, when King *Edward* prepar'd for an Expedition against the *Scots*, to revenge the Murder of *John Cumin*, whom he had taken into his Protection.

In order to this, Proclamation was made for all Persons qualify'd, by Paternal Succession or otherwise, to appear at *Westminster*, and receive the Order of Knighthood: At the Day ap-pointed, 300 Gentlemen, Sons of Earls, Ba-rons and Knights, made their Appearance; and the King having Knighted the Prince of *Wales*, the Prince gave the Honour to *Roger Mortimer*, and

and the rest that attended to receive it with great Solemnity.

He follow'd the King in that Enterprize, *A. D. 1305.* which was almost over before he came, the Earl of *Pembroke* having routed *Bruce*, and reduc'd his Party, *Enemies to Camyn* and the *Baliols*, *Mortimer*, whether out of Fear or Disgust, left the Army without leave. Indeed, his Courage was not his most distinguishing Quality: And this so incens'd the King, that he commanded the Sheriffs of *Gloucester*, *Hereford*, *Shropshire* and *Staffordshire*, to sieze his Lands. However, *Mortimer* found means to procure the Mediation of Queen *Margaret*, Aunt to the Princess *Isabella of France*, who marry'd King *Edward the Second*; and in the following Year all his Lands were restor'd to him.

Edward the Second, about the same time succeeded his Father; and in the third Year of his *A. D. 1309.* Reign, the Lord *Roger Mortimer* was made Governor of the Castle of *Buelt* in *Brecknockshire*. This King had recall'd *Gaveston*; and he renew'd his corrupt Practices: Upon which the Barons remonstrate against him, and he is sent to *Ireland* for a few Months, whence he return'd to the Possession of new Favours, which he put to such an ill Use, that his Tyranny grew intolerable, and provok'd the Barons not only to threaten the King, but to take Arms against him. 'Tis very probable *Mortimer*, whose Ambition began early to shew it self, sided with the Favourite, in hopes to be one himself. For, during these Transactions, in the 6th Year of this King, we find mention made of Moneys exhibited out of the Exchequer to him, in recompence of his Expences in *Gascoigne* for the King's

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1317. Service. He was in the fatal Battle of *Bannock-bourne*, and continu'd in the *Scots Wars* the four following Years: 'n the last of which, the 11th of King *Edward*, he was made Lord Justice of *Ireland*; so important a Trust at that time, that it shews he was far advanc'd in the King's Favour: For the Island was then invaded by *Edward Bruce*, who had made himself Master of a good Part of it, and assum'd the Title of King. *Mortimer* carry'd with him Thirty Eight Knights, and took upon him to make Two more upon his arrival there: Where being join'd by *John de Birmingham*, and *Sir Nicholas de Verdon*, he clear'd the Kingdom of the *Lacyes*, who put themselves under the Protection of the *Scots*. But his Feats of Arms make no great Figure in our Histories, he being cut out more for a Court than a Camp, and fitter for Intrigue than Action. *Sir John de Birmingham* had the Honour of Knighthood conferr'd on him by *Mortimer*, who the next Year engag'd in the *Scots Wars*, but did nothing in them worthy remembrance.

Before this there had been great Differences between *Guy de Beauchamp*, Earl of *Warwick*, whom *Gaveston* us'd to call the *Black Dog of Arden*, then lately deceas'd, and the Lord *Mortimer*, about certain Lands in the Marches of *Wales*, which were made up by a Contract of Marriage between *Henry de Beauchamp*, the Earl of *Warwick's* Son, and the Lord *Mortimer's* Daughter, which afterwards took effect, the Bishop of *Hereford* writing to the Pope for a Dispensation on Account of their Affinity.

John, Brother to the Lord *Roger Mortimer*, departing this Life, *A. D.* 1318. the latter had Livery of the Mannois of *Bromsgrave* and *Nor-*

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ton in the County of Worcester as his next Heir. John had obtain'd a Grant of them the same Year, in fee Farm paying 10*l.* a Year into the Exchequer. The Lord Mortimer, was now also constituted Lord Justice of Ireland a Second time, and raising Forces in the Marches, assisted Sir John de Charlton Lord of Powis, in right of his Wife Hawise, whose Marriage the King had granted to the Lord Mortimer, against Griffith Uncle to Hawise, who had entered Powis Land with a great Force, and committed Excessive Spoil. But the Lord Mortimer obliged him to submit after much Peril, and Trouble, and Restor'd the Injur'd Knight, and his Lady to the Peaceable Enjoyment of their Territories. He Marry'd his Daughter Maud to John, Son and Heir to Sir John de Charlton and the Lady Hawise, and had himself the Inheritance of certain Lands given him by them, for the good Offices he had done them, as also the Forest of Ucheldre, which lay contiguous to his Lordship of Kedemyn.

In the Year 1320. He Marry'd his Son Roger Mortimer to Joan, Daughter of the Lord Edmund Butler of Ireland, and it appears by Deeds executed at Wigmore, that all the Lord Butler's Castles, and Lands in Ireland were settled on Roger the Younger, and his Wife, and the Heirs Male of his Body.

By these Alliances, and the Additions he had made to his Fortune, the Lord Mortimer was now become very Powerful, and began to be look'd upon as one of the Principal Barons. As such he was courted to joyn with those Lords, who oppos'd the Arbitrary Government of King Edward, and his new Minion, Hugh Spencer the Younger: Occasion of Quarrel was easily taken,

where so little caution was observ'd in giving it. But the Pretence made use of by the Earl of *Hereford*, and the *Mortimers* was this: A Baron named *William Brewes*, having wasted his Estate in *Wales*, offer'd to sell part of his Inheritance to several Purchasers, *Humphrey de Bohun Earl of Hereford*, obtain'd leave of the King to buy it, and bargain'd for it, it lying near his own Lands on the Borders: The Lord *Mortimer*, and Sir *Roger Mortimer* his Uncle, for the same reason contracted also for it with Sir *William Brewes*; not knowing any thing of the Earl of *Hereford*'s Bargain: But *Hugh Spencer* having Lands also in those Parts, in right of *Eleanor* his Wife, one of the three Sisters, and Coheirs of *Gilbert de Clare Earl of Gloucester*, obtains a more Especial Leave of the King, and Buys it out of all their Hands. The Earl of *Hereford* complaining to *Thomas Earl of Lancaster*, Son to the Earl of *Lancaster*, Uncle to the King, a very Popular Lord to whom all the Discontented resort'd for Refuge; and the Barons meeting at *Shireburn*, enter'd into a Confederacy against *Hugh Spencer* and his Father; Swearing not to lay down their Arms till the *Spencers* were banish'd. In the mean time the Younger *Spencer* was so far from fearing them, that he gave new occasion of Offence; for not contented with his third Part of the Lands, of the late Earl of *Gloucester*, he attempted to posses himself by Force of the other two Thirds belonging to his Wives Sister, and invaded the Country of *Glamorgan*; *Mortimer* being Assisted by the Earl of *Hereford*, and Sir *Roger* his Uncle, oppos'd him, took the Castle of *Caerdiff*, and sent Sir *Geoge Gorges* the Governor, Prisoner to his Castle of *Wigmore*:

He

He then brought all the Adjacent Country under his Obedience, and aspir'd to a Power, which began to give the other Barons a Jealousy of his Ambition. And not long after pretending, the Castle of *Clonre* with all the Lands, and Honours annex'd to them was his; He forcibly enter'd it, and took *Fealty* of the Tenants, tho' the Lordship belong'd to *Edmund Fitz Allen*, Earl of *Arundel*; whose Right to it hasten'd his End, as will be seen hereafter.

The Lord *Mortimer*, was one of the Lords who march'd with the Earls of *Lancaster*, *Hereford*, and the Confederated Barons to *London*, to oblige the King to Banish the *Spencers*; These Barons were all cloath'd in Green, except their Right Hand which was Yellow, to distinguish themselves from the Lords of the Court Party, or rather the Favourites Faction, which was forc'd to submit; and the King by an Edict, Publish'd in *Westminster-hall*, by the Earl of *Hereford*, Banish'd the *Spencers* the Kingdom. The Confederated Barons, notwithstanding this Success could not long maintain their Ground, yet they observ'd no measures with the Court, shutting the Queen out of the Castle of *Leeds* in *Kent*, where she would have log'd, which made her and all her Friends their Enemies. Whether she had taken the Lord *Mortimer* into that Number, then or not, we do not find in History, but 'tis certain she was so provok'd at this Affront, that 'twas at her Instigation the King broke the Agreement with the Barons, took the Castle of *Leeds*, and march'd with an Army against them.

The Lord *Mortimer* now left the Confederate Lords, and fell in with the Court Party, one of the Chief of which was *Aymer de Valence*, Earl of *Pembroke*, a Man of more Reputation than Parts, of more Quality than Merit, and 'tis said it was by his Persuasions and Promises that the two *Mortimers* left the Barons Side, and Embrac'd the Favourites who were return'd to Court: Where however, the Lord *Pembroke* had so little Credit, he could not prevent the sending both the *Mortimers* to Prison. The Younger *Spencer*, never forgave the Opposition he had met with from the Lord *Roger Mortimer* in *Wales*, and had he not got out of his Power by a Stratagem, His Life had paid for't.

The manner of his Escape out of the *Tower*, where he was confin'd, is variously related: Some Authors tell us that Queen *Isabella*, began to look favourably on him, that she convey'd a Sleepy mixture into the Warders Wine, brib'd the Man who was appointed to observe him, and thus he past the Guards. Others, who seem to have less of Romance in their Relation, write that he himself being inform'd, the two *Spencers* resolv'd to have him Executed for High-Treason, made an Entertainment for Sir *Stephen de Segrave*, then Constable of the *Tower*, gave him a Dose which had the same Effect on him, the Wine is said to have had on his Warders, and getting out of his Room by the help of a Cord, and the Assistance of *Gerard de Alspath*, His Immediate Keeper, he found means to convey himself not only out of the *Tower*, but out of the Kingdoms to the Court of *France*, whither the Queen had been sent to Accommodate matters with her Brother *Charles the Fair*, who had

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seiz'd on Part of King *Edward's* Territories there, for the King's refusing to do him Homage. The Queen succeeded so well in her Negotiations, that the Difference was made up, upon Condition her Son *Edward*, Prince of *Wales*, should have the Dutchy of *Aquitain* assign'd him, and do Homage for it. Accordingly he was sent to *France*, and was most welcome to his Mother, who had now all at that Court she held most dear, her Lover and her Son.

Mortimer's Favours from the Queen were too visible to be kept a Secret; and the Affronts she had receiv'd from the *Spencers*, made her the more susceptible of the ill Impressions *Mortimer* might give her of them. Her Love to him was sufficient to have animated her against his Enemies. But she had also a Quarrel of her own, and a Spirit as well prepar'd for Vengeance, as those that hated the Minions could wish.

The *Spencers*, as all Favourites are apt to do, bought themselves so well settled in their Ministry, by the King's Friendship, that they kept no Terms, even with the Queen, whom they treated with Neglect and Lisdain: They lessen'd her Attendance and Maintenance. They sent her to *France* in an ill Humour, with a poor quipage and short Allowance, believing themselves in full Security. Such Men, says Sir *Robert Howard*, so constantly guided by pleasing Weakness, might not discern the Queen might be a dangerous Instrument to employ, that had been so disig'd; but commonly those that do Injuries, are the most apprehensive that they will be remember'd: Or, commonly having no fear of those they oppress, they never consider the future possibility of Revenge. But they apprehend Damage in the Queen's going, yet

yet they chose the least Evil, nothing appearing so terrible, as parting with the King.

The Share Mortimer had in the future Revolution, made it necessary for us to give this Light into the Causes of it. As soon as the King and his Favourites knew he had made his escape, after a diligent, tho' fruitless Search for him, Orders were immediately dispatch'd to the Governor of *Guienne*, and Constable of *Bourdeaux*, to sieze and confine him if he was found within their Jurisdictions. The like Precepts were sent to all the Sheriffs of *England*, and Bailiffs of the Sea-Ports. Hue and Cry was also rais'd to take him dead or alive; for the Minions dreaded his Activity, Ambition and Resentment; especially now by the Queen's Favour he had an Access of Power, which considering how much their Male-Administration had broken the King's Interest, was like to be more than a Match for their own. When they could not get him into their Possession, they exercis'd their Revenge on his Family, shutting up his Wife and Children in *Skipton-Castle* in *Craven*, depriving her of the Attendance of her Domesticks, allowing her only one Woman, Gentleman, a Laundress, Groom and Page which is taken notice of by Historians as a great Punishment: The Court of such Ladies being as much crowded as Princesses are now. *de Ripre* was Constable of the Castle, and would allow'd no more than a Mark a-day for her and her Servants Subsistence, as well in her Journey as her Confinement. For her Cloathes *Dugdale* is so particular, as to mention her Allowance of Ten Marks a Year only. Her Daughters were confin'd to several Nunneries

and nothing but Disgrace and Ruin threaten'd the whole Family of *Mortimer* : When, by a sudden Turn, it rose again in the Fortune of this Lord ; and not many Reigns after, produc'd an Heir to the Crown of *England*.

'Tis the Nature of Favourites, in Fear to attempt to preserve themselves, rather by Cruelty than Moderation. Loath they are to humble themselves to others, while they have the Prince in Subjection ; and *Mortimer* being thus a-new provok'd by the *Spencers*, and encourag'd by his Mistress's Smiles, put her, as soon as she had her Son with her, on contriving how to right her self and him by Force. The Bishop of *Exeter*, who attended the Prince to *France*, discover'd their Intrigues, and inform'd the King of it, having secretly left the Court of *France* for that purpose. The Queen and Prince were presently summon'd into *England* ; but as Sir *Robert* says in his History, *She was stay'd by the most powerful Causes, Love and Revenge* : For *she that now seem'd free from all Ties to her King and Husband, plac'd her loose Affections on Roger Mortimer* : *She knew England could neither be safe to her, nor him whom she lov'd as her self* ; and therefore resolv'd to trust to any Thing rather than her Husband and the *Spencers*.

I have seen some Histories which do not agree entirely with this ; informing us that *Mortimer* did not escape out of the Tower by Stratagem, but by the Mediation of his Uncle, Sir *Roger Mortimer*, who had made his Peace with the *Spencers*. But the best Historians relate the Fact as I have done ; and 'tis more likely that he fled to *France* to save his Life, than to follow the Queen, who had not yet discover'd that

guilty Hatred to her Husband, and Passion for himself. For her Disobedience she and the Prince were declar'd *Enemies to the Kingdom*: It being the constant Stile of Favourites to denominate their own Enemies the Kingdom's. Thus the best Friends it has, often lie under that wicked Appellation; and the highest Quality cannot secure those who are hated by Men in Favour, from the Ignominy of Treason. All that adher'd to the Queen and Prince were banish'd, by Proclamation thro' all the Counties of *England*. And 1000l. Reward was promised to any one that should bring the Body of *Mortimer* dead or alive.

The disaffected Lords in *France*, to enflame the Queen the more, frighten her with a Plot to murther her and the Prince. 'Tis certain the King and his Minions were treating with the *French* King to deliver up his Sister, her Gallant, *Mortimer*, and all the *English* Noblemen who had resorted to her. Among whom were *Edmund*, Earl of *Kent*, the King's Brother, who had been sent to *Gascoigne* to defend that Province, before the Accommodation, and *Aymer* Earl of *Pembroke*. The Queen, to prevent her Brother's intended Treachery, flies with her Paramour, the Lord *Mortimer*, and her Followers, to the Count of *Haynault* for Protection, to whose Daughter *Philippa* she contracted her Son, and procur'd Assistance from him and the Count of *Holland*, both of Men and Money, to return to *England* and remove the *Spencers* from the Ministry. Thus supply'd, she set sail with her belov'd *Mortimer*; and landing at *Harwich*, was join'd by several Lords Spiritual and Temporal, Knights, Gentlemen and others. Which

Which so allarm'd the King and his Minions, that they fled to the *West*, and were follow'd by the Queen and her Army, which was now too strong for them. At *Oxford* the Bishop of *Hereford* preach'd on that Text, *My Head aketh, my Head aketh*; and his Application had in it more execrable Doctrine, than ever was utter'd before our late Schismatical Regicides. The Bishop of *Lincoln*, and the Clergy, declar'd also for the Queen; and not a Word of Passive-Obedience or Non-Resistance was heard, to put a stop to hers and the Prince's Progress. The Queen, to revenge the Proscribing *Mortimer's* Head, did the same by the *Spencers*, promising a Reward of 2000 Pounds for the younger's. In the mean time, the King fled to the Isle of *Lundy* in the *Severn-Sea*, and thence into *Glamorganshire*, where he hid himself in the Abbey of *Neath*, the present Residence of Sir *Humphry Mackworth*, whose late Misfortunes have brought such Dishonour to his Name. Here he was sometime after surpriz'd and deliver'd to *Henry*, Earl of *Lancaster*, Son of *Thomas*, whom he had beheaded. This Earl brought him and the younger *Spencer* to the Queen at *Hereford*, where she kept her Court. And here *Spencer* the Son, Earl of *Gloucester*, was hang'd, as his Father, Earl of *Winchester*, had been before at *Bristol*.

Here it was also that the Earl of *Arundel* was beheaded, by the Procurement of the Lord *Mortimer*; who, as we have already said, had possesst himself of his Castle of *Clonnew*: It being an old Practice in Favourites, to make Riches Criminal, when they covet or want them. The same Fate, and at the Instigation of *Mortimer*,

had two other Barons, *Dangle* and *Michelder* of the King's Party.

Now it was that this Lord govern'd the Queen's Affections and Affairs. Honours and Places are heap'd upon him, and the best Families in *England* court his Alliance. He was made Governour of *Denbeigh*-Castle; and when Prince *Edward* was elected King in the room of his Father, among the Knights that were made at the new King's Coronation, were his three Sons, *Edmund*, *Roger* and *Jeffrey*. His Daughters were marry'd to the Sons of the greatest Barons: As *Beatrix*, to *Edward*, Son of *Thomas de Brokerton* Earl of *Norfolk*, Marshal of *England*, and the King's Uncle; and *Agnes* to the Son and Heir of the Lord *Hastings*.

We find that this extraordinary Revolution was approv'd of by the Spiritual as well as Temporal Barons. Sir *Robert Howard* tells it thus: ' It was adjudg'd that *Edward II.* was no longer fit to wear the Crown; and for his Male-Administration of the Royal Authority was therefore deposed, and his Son to be elected King. To this the Bishops consented and the Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury* preach'd on the occasion, choosing a proper Text, *Vox Populi, Vox Dei*. I shall continue my History in the Words of the same honourable Author: ' The Queen now with her beloved *Mortimer* with the Advice of her Great Counsellor *Adam de Orton*, Bishop of *Hereford*, assum'd the Exercise of all Power, and quickly shew'd what counterfeit Sorrow for her unfortunate Husband she try'd to disguise her self in; for she now allow'd him but 100 Marks a-Year, which she procur'd a Third Part of the Revenue

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be settled on her self; and *Mortimer*, the worst of Men, by her guilty Passion, seem'd to reign. But in a little time his Actions met with that just Punishment that was due to them. He was so conscious of his own Guilt, that he got a Pardon to be past, for his breaking Prison and other Offences in the preceding Reign. *Daniel* observes, That to uphold this Change, an Expedition was undertaken for *Scotland*. The Scots were advanc'd as far as *Stanhope-Park*: The English Army was thrice as numerous; yet, says the Historian, by the Treason of some great Men, the Enemy escap'd, and nothing was done. Which Treason is chiefly imputed to *Mortimer*, whom the Queen now doated on so much, that she refus'd to see her Husband. She had been so possest by a fond Passion for *Mortimer*, says Sir *Robert*, that all Duty and Vertue were long before sacrific'd to that Idol; and her Husband was as much ber Apprehension as Aversion. *Mortimer* also as wickedly Jealous, thought himself never safe while the King liv'd; nor could they be ignorant of the Murmers against their scandalous Course of Life, and that the hard Usage of the King proceeded from thence; which urg'd them to the cruel Opinion, that his Death was their only Security. Accordingly it was soon after effected at *Berkley-Castle*, by the Lord *Matrevers* and Sir *Thomas Gourney*; who, tho' they did it by Commission, thought themselves not safe while they were in *England*.

There was nothing now to disturb the Queen and her Minion in the Enjoyment of their lawless Loves and Power. *Mortimer* was made an Earl, and he took the Marches of *Wales* for his Title, which gave rise to the Royal Earldom of *March*, it being afterwards in the Crown, as

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on the Advancement of *Edward IV.* who descended from this *Mortimer*, to the Throne. I have seen a Fragment of *Ben Johnson's*, wherein *Mortimer* is introduc'd speaking on his being created an Earl; and there is something in the *Soliloqui* which is worth rememb'ring.

This Rise is made, yet ! and we now stand rank'd,
To view about us, all that were above us !
Nought hinders now our Prospect, all are even,
We walk upon a Level. *Mortimer*
Is a great Lord of late, and a new Thing.
At what a divers Price do divers Men
A&t the same Things ! Another might have had
Perhaps the Hurdle, or at least the Ax,
For what I have this Coronet, Robes and Wax.
There is a Fate that flies with tow'ring Spirits
Home to the Mark, and never checks at Conscience.
Poor plodding Priests, and preaching Fryers may
Their hollow Pulpits, and their empty Isles (make
Of Churches ring with that round Word : But we
That draw the subtle and more piercing Air,
In that sublimed Region of a Court,
Know all is good we make so, and go on
Secur'd by the Prosperity of our Crimes.
To Day is *Mortimer* made Earl : For what ?
For that, &c.

As his Estate before his Creation was not great, however he had encreas'd it, answerable to his new Title, he gets good Grants apace, as in Consideration of a Promise of 1000*l.* a Year from the King, a Grant in Fee of the Castles of *Denbigh*, *Oswaldestre*, *Shrawerdyne* and *Clonne*; with the Mannors of *Ryton*, *Wroxestre*, and *Conede*, in *Shropshire*; the Mannor of *Chipping-Norton* in *Oxford*.

Oxfordshire: As also other Castles, Mannors and Lands, which had been the late Earl of Arundel's, who was, as has been said, put to Death by his Procurement.

He was at this time at the highth of his Fortune, the Object of universal Hatred and Envy. Those that courted him for his Favour, abhorring him for his Cruelty and Ambition. He was not content with the Title of *Earl of the Marches*, he got himself to be made *Justice of all Wales*, resolving that his own Country should be one of the chief Scenes of his Pride. He had the Vanity to imitate the British Kings, and held a Round Table at *Bedford*. The King taking a Progress into the Marches, so order'd, perhaps to give his Mother the Pleasure of viewing a Territory of which her Lover was Lord; here *Mortimer* magnificently treated the whole Court in his Castles of *Ludlow* and *Wigmore*, as also in his Forests and Parks. He was besides at a great Expence in Tilts and other Exercises, for which he did not think the King made him due Returns.

Indeed, the young Monarch had receiv'd some evil Impressions of him from those who wish'd well to their Country; as the Earls of *Exeter* and *Leicester*, the Lord *Mountacute*, Sir *Robert Holland*, Sir *Thomas de la More*, and others. The latter was a Knight of *Gloucestershire*, and wrote the Life of *Edward II.* whose Servant he had been. *Mortimer* being thus possest of the Queen's boundless Favour, of vast Revenues, and absolute Power, grew intollerably Proud, giving Occasion of Discontent to the Ancient Nobility by his Behaviour and Ministry.

His own Family was so disgusted at his Pride, that 'tis said his Son *Jeffry* stil'd him *The King of Folly*.

A. D.

1328.

Folly. He kept another Round Table in *Wales*, thinking he had as much Right to the Honours, as the Authority of the Kings of *Britain*. The same Year, at a Parliament held at *Northampton*, his Interest was so great, that an infamous Peace was made with the *Scots*, and a Sum of Money taken by the Queen and him, for which the *Scots* Homage was traiterously deliver'd up, as was likewise the *Black Cross*, which King *Edward I.* brought out of *Scotland* from the Abbey of *Scone*; where it had been long deposited as a most valuable Relick, with these were deliver'd *Ragman Role* and many ancient Jewels and Monuments.

Mortimer looking on *Edmund*, Earl of *Kent*, the King's Uncle, as an Obstacle to his ambitious Designs, had him try'd and condemn'd at a Parliament held at *Winchester* the same Year, for contriving, as it was pretended, his Brother *Edward II.*'s Restoration, tho' without any manner of Proof or Probability; but the Majority of those two Parliaments were on his side, and he stuck at nothing to secure himself in his high Station, to satisfie his Pride, or glut his Revenge. But this hated Majority was of no long continuance; and the Favo'rite *Mortimer* was become so Imperious and Insolent, so Covetous and Cruel, the Barons could no longer bear his Tyranny. All the Treasure of *England* was at his Command and he wasted it on himself and his Creatures. For his Avarice had a mixture of Profusion, and he was always liberal enough when it was to serve his Pride or his Vanity. *Henry*, Earl of *Lancaster*, Brother to Earl *Thomas* who was beheaded in the last Reign, was the First Prince of the Blood, and the Kingdom began to be uneasy to find he had no share in the Government, th

the Parliament that elected the King had appointed him to be Chief of the Ministers, who were to have the Administration under the Queen during the King's Minority ; him *Mortimer* intended to deal with as he had dealt by the Earl of *Kent* ; but the Earl of *Lancaster* got Information of his Purpose, and made his escape. *Mortimer* follows him, taking with him the young King, whom he oblig'd to ride 24 Miles in one Day after his Kinsman, at which the King was very much displeas'd ; and it made way for the terrible Revolution which happen'd to the Favourite.

Favourites have generally taken too much care to improve their good Fortune, by acquiring Gifts and Grants of their Masters : And those that have done it too hastily, or too profusely, have never fail'd to draw on themselves the Ruin which attends such undeserv'd Acquisitions. *Mortimer* continu'd to get more and more of the Crown and other Lands into his Possession, having obtain'd Grants

Of the Castle and Mannor of *Hentley* in *Worcestershire*, the Chaces of *Malvern* in *Gloucestershire* and *Corse*.

The Town of *Wiche*, in *Worcestershire*.

The Castle of *Clifford*, and Mannor of *Glasebury*, which had been the younger *Spencers*.

The Castle of *Trim* in *Ireland* to himself and his Wife, with ample Privileges.

The Territory of *Danalmaine* in *Ireland*, with large Jurisdiction.

His Son *Jeffry* had also a Grant of *Donyngton-Castle*, in *Leicestershire*.

The Mannors of *Lechdale* and *Sodyngtong*, in *Gloucestershire*.

The Mannor of *Woking*, in *Surrey*.

Byeby and *Castre*, in *Lincolnshire*.

Ashburn, in the Peak of *Derby*.

Rydale, in *Rutlandshire*.

And *Kinley*, in *Wiltshire*, which was the Estate of the King's Uncle, the late Earl of *Kent*.

We may by this observe, that he thirsted as much after the Possessions, as the Blood of those whom he had caus'd to be put to Death; as the Earl of *Arundel*, the Earl of *Gloucester* and Earl of *Kent*. To these Grants were added those

Of the Wapentake of *Ryfley*, in *Derbyshire*.

The Wapentake of *Plumtree* and *Alreton*, in *Norfolk*.

The Manner of *Reseby*, in *Leicestershire*.

And *Drayton*, in the County of *Northampton*.

Such Territories as these, gotten by such means, could not but provoke both Barons and Commons; and it was impossible he could hold them long, when so many had been injur'd and offended by his obtaining them. His paternal Estate had been very indifferent; his Alliance not very extraordinary; nor his Family much talk'd of: To rise so fast, and without having merited it by his Service, was of it self enough to set the Nobility against him; and the Queen's boundless Favour, his unreasonable Grants, the Pride of his Nature, and his Contempt of those he had humbled, gave them an Opportunity to encrease the publick *Odium* against him, and secretly to work his overthrow. I have seen a Tragedy dedicated to the late Earl of *Romney*, entitled, *The Fall of Mortimer*; which, though written by a mean Pen, has, however, touch'd upon some Parts of the Story, in a manner that recommends it to the Reader. As where the Lord *Montacute* hectors him, and tells him;

Ld.

Ld. *Montacute*. Thy Terrors last on me,
 Look big upon those Bastard *Englishmen*,
 Who tamely yield their Rights and Charters up,
 And swear to pick a Parliament ;
 Shall sell our Freedoms, Persons and Estates,
 To gain a short-liv'd Smile,
 They probably may dread thee.

And in another Place :

Sir *Rob. Holland*. He's rather a Meteor or some
 (Exhalation,
 Rais'd by the Sulphureous Vapours of the Earth,
 Which borrowing of a Blaze from real Lights,
 Attracts the Eyes of Fools to gaze on it.

And,

Sir *T. De la More*. Where now is Right, to
 (whom shall we appeal ?
 The Queen has plac'd the Pow'r on *Mortimer*,
 Whilst the Laws Edge is ground but on one side,
 The Man that dares reflect on his Proceedings
 Is streight beset and sworn into some Plot,
 His Life or Fortunes siez'd, it may be both.
 Juries and Witnesses are kept in Pay,
 Which have agreed his Ruin e'er he's heard.

Ld. *Mount*. What are our Princes, what the
 (Nobles now ?
 Are they not Vassals to this Upstart's State ?
 No more the Fame of our Nobility
 Be call'd to Mind, &c.—

King. Rise *De la More*, for I will be my self,
 And this Usurper March shall down to Hell.
 All spare the Tree, whose Branches serve as Shade,
 Till the spread Mischief kills the under-Plants ;
 Then ev'ry Man assists to fell it down :
 o this *Colossus* of the *English Isle*,
 Under whose Legs the tallest Ships must pass,
 For they gain Harbour shall to Seas be hurl'd,
 And in their Bottom find a Monument.

Tho' the Poets Genius be not answerable to the Subject, yet there's something in his Scenes resembling the Character of *Mortimer*, whose Life I write, and is very well worth preserving. The Lord *Mountacute*, whom the Poet makes to speak, was Sir *William de Mountacute*, whom *Edward III.* employ'd to sieze *Mortimer*.

When, after his faithful Counsellors had represented to him the Dishonour he brought on himself and his People, he order'd him to be apprehended in the Castle of *Nottingham*, in the Year 1329. At which time a Parliament was held in that Town. His Power was so excessive, that 'twas thought the most prudent way to secure his Person first, and then Impeach him in Parliament. The Person entrusted with this Commission, was the above-mention'd Sir *William de Mountacute*, who took to his Assistance Sir *Humphry de Bohun*, Sir *Ralph de Stafford*, Sir *William de Clinton*, Sir *John Neville*, Sir *William Eland*, and others, who in the dead time of the Night got into the Castle by a way under ground, which past thro' the Rock, with Stairs up to the Keep; and it is still on Account of this Adventure call'd *Mortimer's Hole*. By this Passage they enter'd a Room that was contiguous to the Queen's Apartment, where the King expected them, whom they left there; and entring the Queen's Bed-Chamber, found her and *Mortimer* ready to go to Bed. They siez'd *Mortimer* immediately, and leading him out, the Queen follow'd, crying *Beill Fills ayes pitie du gentil Mortimer*. Good Son take pity on gentle *Mortimer*; for she imagin'd the King her Son was among them. This was not done without Blood-shed, according to *Knighton*; who writes, That *Mortimer* having with him *Henry, Bishop of Lincoln*, and some others, they made Resistance

sistance, wherein two of *Mortimer's* Dependents and Creatures were kill'd, as Sir *Hugh de Turpliton*, Steward of the King's House, and *John de Monmouth*; for which Sir *William de Mountacute* had afterwards a Pardon. The siezing of *Mortimer* had not been so easy, had it not been done by Surprize; for he always had about 200 Knights and Gentlemen, besides inferiour Servants, attending on him.

As soon as he was siez'd, his Adherents and Followers, of which the Town of *Nottingham* was full, had the same Fate; among these were his Sons Sir *Edmund* and Sir *Jeffry Mortimer*, who were all sent to *London* under a Guard, and there kept in Custody till the Parliament met. Precepts were issu'd out for siezing all his Castles, Lands and Mannors; a Commission was granted to Sir *John de Kingston* and others, to take an Inventory of all his Treasures and Goods, except what was in his Wife's Wardrobe, for the use of her self, her Children and Servants.

When the Parliament met, they took from the Queen all her large Dower, and allow'd her only a Pension of 1000*l.* a-Year. Several Articles were exhibited against *Mortimer*: As that he procur'd the late King's Death; was Author of the Scots Escape at *Stanhope-Park*, corrupted with the Gift of 20000*l.* that he procur'd the Marriage and Peace with Scotland, so dishonourable to the King and Kingdom; that he consum'd the King's Treasure, besides all that was taken from the Spencers; that he had been too familiar with the Queen; that he had got the richest Wardships in England; and had been an Evil Counsellor to the King. The King commanded the Barons to consider of these Articles, and to give Judgment; which they did, finding *Mortimer* guilty of all of them; and Sentence was pronounced

nounc'd against him to die as a Traytor ; pur-suant to which he was hang'd, drawn and quar-ter'd, at the Common-Gallows, then call'd *The A. D. Elms, in West-Smythfield*, where his Body remain'd 1329. two Days, as an opprobrious Spectacle for all Beholders. Upon which I cannot omit relating a Reflection of that judicious Historian *Daniel* ; Such were the tragical and bloody Returns those ambitious Supplanters of others got by exchange of the time.

Mortimer's Body, when it had hung thus two Days, was taken down, and bury'd at *Grey-Fryers* in *London*, but many Years after translated to *Wigmore*. 'Tis remarkable, that Judgment, Sen-tence, and Execution, pass'd on this Earl without being heard, as had been practis'd in the ill times when he was Master, against the *Spencers* and the Earl of *Kent*, in whose Death it was notoriously known, he himself had the greatest Hand.

— *Nec lex est justior ulla*
Quam necis Artifices arte perire sua.

Such was the Fate of a Minister and Favourite, the First of the House of *Mortimer*, which owes its Grandure to him : For, notwithstanding his Grants were resum'd, so much was either restor'd to his Son, or left of his Lands to him and his Mother, that *Edmund*, the Grandson of this Lord *Mortimer*, marry'd *Philippa*, Daughter to *Lionel* Duke of *Clarence*, by whom he had *Roger*, Lord *Mortimer*, and Earl of *March*, proclaim'd Heir to the Crown by *Richard II*. Which *Roger* had a Daughter nam'd *Anne*, marry'd to *Richard* Earl of *Cambridge*, Son of *Edmund* of *Langley*, Duke of *York*, Grand-father of *Edward IV*. King of *England*. And thus came the Name of *Mortimer* ally'd to the Imperial Crown of this Kingdom, after the first Earl of it had come to so ignominious an End, as to die the Death of a common Malefactor, as aforesaid.

THE

THE
LIVES
OF
ROBERT,
Earl of Oxford, &c.

Favourite to Richard the Second.

TWAS the same Book, Sir Robert Howard's Reflections, &c. put me on writing this Life, as gave me the Hint of the last, the Earl of Oxford the Subject of it, being Chief Minister in the one Reign, as was Mortimer in the other, and both till their Fall.

The Family of *De Vere*, who for above Twenty Generations were Earls of *Oxford*, are of no older Date in *England*, than the Conquest; and the first of them who is taken notice of in History, was *Aubrey de Vere*, in King *Stephen's* and *Henry the II's* time: He was a famous Lawyer, and for his Day a Man of eminent Learning. The *De Veres* make, however, no great Figure in the English History, till the surprizing Rise of *Robert De Vere*, whose Life I shall attempt to write.

He was the Son of *Thomas De Vere*, the 8th Earl of *Oxford*, of this Family, and born in the Year 1362. the 37th of *Edward III.* so that he was but three Years elder than King *Richard II.* Son to *Edward the Black Prince*, and Grandson and

and Heir to King *Edward III.* Tho' the Parliament had appointed *Thomas Beauchamp*, Earl of *Warwick*, to be Tutor to the King, yet the young Earl of *Oxford*, and some other Lords of dissolute Life, so won upon his Affections, that he early gave himself up to their Government, and soon made his own uneasie to his People.

De Vere was high in the King's Favour in the 6th Year of his Reign, A. D. 1383. when he made Proof of his Age, did Homage, and had Livery of his Lands given him. His Marriage had been granted by King *Edward III.* to *Engelram Earl of Bedford*, to the intent that he might take to Wife *Philippa*, Daughter to that Earl, which he did accordingly; and even while he was in Ward, he had 100*l.* a Year allow'd him, for his better Support, out of the Exchequer. King *Richard*, who lov'd him to Excess, and thought he could never do too much before, gave him a Grant of the Estate of *John de Coupeland*, and the Castle of *Queenborough in Kent*. Indeed his Influence was so great in all that King's Administration, that he could do what he pleas'd. Those that shar'd the King's Affections and Power with him, were *Neville*, Archbishop of *York*, *Michael de la Poole*, a Citizen's Son, Earl of *Suffolk*, *Sir Robert Fresilian*, Lord Chief Justice, and *Sir Nicholas Bramber*, Alderman of *London*: Of these Sir *Robert Howard* says, *The Earl of Oxford seem'd the best, as hardly he could do otherwise, being set with such Foils.* And a little after, *The first Testimony that these shew'd of their Animosities against the Methods of a just Minister, was the displacing Sir Richard Scrope, Lord Chancellor, who in all things us'd an impartial Uprightness, which was an Offence to their loose and partial Designs.* But they did not only sharpen the King's Nature against Men

in point of Offices and Employments, but against their Lives. There are seldom, continues he, any extreme Proceedings in a Government, but there are deprav'd Persons enough in all Conditions, ready to swim with the Stream, and take the Benefit of any side of Fortune. For when Mischief is to be practis'd, Corruption is the Consequence; and there are always those ready, whom no Consideration ballances in their Natures, with the Height of Honours and Benefits. During their careless Ministry, the French insulted the Coasts, and landed at Dover, Winchelsea, Hastings, and even at Gravesend. The Rabble provok'd by many Exactions, rose under John Ball, a factious Priest, of less Infamy than one with whose Name I will not dishonour this History. And tho' the King and his Favourites were in much Danger from this Rebellion, yet after it was supprest, neither he nor they seem'd to have any Disposition to redress the People's Grievances. Oxford, and his other Minions, both fear'd and hated any Men of Honour and Quality that might have Interest to cross their Designs. The Favourites flush'd with their Success over the Rebels, assum'd new Titles and Dignities, and particularly Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford, was created Marquis of Dublin. On his and his Friends Promotion to new Honours, Trussel reflects thus. They grew in Hate, as they did in Honour, for many of Ancient Nobility did stomach their undeserv'd Advancement, and with these the Votes of the People generally went. However, the Earl of Oxford, as if he took a pleasure in encreasing the Hatred and Envy of his Enemies, and did it on purpose to mortifie them, a few Months after got himself to be created Duke of Ireland. To accompany these Honours, the Castle of Okeham in Rutlandshire, and all the Forest of Rutland, were

given him ; as also the Castle, Mannor, and Burrough of Barnstable ; the Mannors of *Fremingham*, *Jefracomb*, *Comb-Martin*, *South-Moulton*, *Hols-worthy*, *Nemel-Bow*, *Bovy-Tracy*, *Holne*, *Dertington*, *Kingston*, *Blockden*, *Lang-Acre* ; and all the Lands of *James de Andeleigh*, in the Counties of *Cornwall*, *Devonshire*, and *Somerset*. But not content with this, he had the Arrogance and Indiscretion to procure the most unaccountable Grant that ever Prince gave his Subject, being no less than the Lands and Dominion of a whole Kingdom, that of *Ireland*, which were given him, with *all the Profits, &c. as amply, and in as full extent, as the King himself ought to have the same*. Nor did even all this bound his Ambition and Avarice ; for *Charles de Blois*, who laid Claim to the Dutchy of *Bretagne*, and had been long a Prisoner in *England*, was, tho' a protest Enemy to the House of *Montfort*, then in Possession of that Dutchy, and under the Protection of *England*, set at Liberty on paying 30000 Marks to the Duke of *Ireland*, with which 'twas pretended he was to raise and pay 500 Horse and 1000 Foot in *Ireland* ; the King promising not only to send him thither, but that he should stay there. The Parliament consented to this Donation, being very willing to purchase at any Rate the Absence of so dangerous a Minister. The Parliament had before got the Earl of *Suffolk* remov'd but they were scarce broke up, before both the Duke of *Ireland* and *Suffolk* return'd to Court and reign'd there more absolutely than ever. All the great Lords, who had been instrumental in their removal, were discarded. The Favourites and their Faction engrost once more the Royal Authority, leaving only the Name to the King, and turn'd out every Body that had appear'd

pear'd for the King's true Service and the Good of their Country. Upon which Sir Robert has this Reflection; *This look'd like the feeble Policy of violent and self-interested Counsellors, which was apply'd to Men and not to Things; as if the removal of those that oppos'd their Designs, took away the Danger that attended them.* As long as there were injur'd Men, they must have Enemies; and their Safety was no way probable, but by better Principles and Practices. The Men who manag'd all, now these were disgrac'd, were, as had been said, the Earl of Oxford, the Chancellor, and the Arch-bisshop of York; who, says Sir Robert Howard, joyn'd with them to strengthen their Power, and weaken their Kings. What follows will, I am sure, be welcome to the Reader, coming from so excellent a Pen: *They that had Influence enough to make a Prince believe their Cause to be his, might easily carry him on to revenge those Affronts he now assum'd to be his own.* To this belongs the same Fate that attends indirect and unsteady Councils. They must be maintain'd by the Oppression or Ruin of those that suffer'd by them, and no measure taken for the Preservation of any, but theirs that merited the Punishment. The Argument that was and must be us'd to deceive Princes, was then enforc'd by these Favourite Ministers; That the Arrows shot at them were intended against the Prince; and 'twas but a Method of Rebellion, to confine a King on whom to confer his Favour. And therefore to avoid the Dishonour of a Limited Monarchy, he must now use Power, &c.

About this time the Earls of Arundel and Nottingham perform'd so many brave Actions abroad against the French, that all Mouths were filled with just Praises, *The King only excepted*, says my honourable Author, to whom Satisfaction did most

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belong. For at their return they found so cold a Reception from him, that it seem'd they were rather for given for *Misdemeanours*, than receiv'd for *Merits*. The Strangeness of his Words told too plainly that publick Merit lost its *Nature*, when the desert was in the *Enemies* of his *Favourites*. How much more Limited, continues he, is a King by such as confine him to their narrow Interest? He must neither reward *Virtue*, nor punish *Vice*: His best and bravest Subjects must not be esteem'd, nor his *Worst* question'd or punish'd. The usage of such Illustrious Lords, who had done great Services against the Common Enemy, could not but give new Occasion of disgust against the Ministers, yet *De Vere* so little valu'd the Hate of either the Nobility or Commonalty, that he defy'd them in all his Actions; and in the midst of their Clamours, had the Insolence to turn off his Fair Lady *Philippa*, tho' her Mother was the King's Aunt, and marry a Vintner's Daughter, a Match better suited to his Merit than his Fortune. The Duke of *Gloucester*, the King's and her Uncle, threatned him with Revenge; but it only animated him to hasten the Destruction of that Noble Prince, who had in all this tyrannical Reign been the Bulwark of the *English* Liberties. Whether King *Richard* was pleas'd with this Match, because the Woman came with his Queen from *Bohemia*, or could not be displeas'd with any thing that pleas'd his Minion; He was so far from shewing Resentment, that the Duke of *Ireland* govern'd him and his Kingdom as entirely as ever: Yet in seeming Compliance with the Desires of the People, the Duke made mighty Preparations for his Voyage to *Ireland*, which was put off from time to time under various Pretences. At last, when he thought he should not be able any longer to defer it, without involving

involving the King himself, and the Ministers, in a Quarrel with the Parliament, before they were provided for it: He gave out, that he would depart; accordingly he made a shew of proceeding in his Journey to the Coast, where he was to embark; and so little were the King and Court sollicitous to observe any Measures with the People, that they accompan'd him in great State; the King, the Earl of *Suffolk*, their Lawyer *Tresilian*, and the Chiefs of the Faction going with him as far as *Wales*, where the Royal Progress, and the Duke's *Irish* Journey ended; for they turn'd about and went to *Nottingham*: At which Place this Black Cabal of Ministers enter'd into a Consultation, how to destroy not only the Lords of the *Ruin'd Party*, but the *English* Constitution. They first summon'd the Sheriffs of every County, to know what Assistance they could give them; but they were answer'd, *The People were very much satisfy'd in their Opinions, that the Lords were Lovers of their King and Country; and therefore they durst promise nothing in that Matter.* The disgrac'd Lords were the Duke of *Gloucester*, the Earls of *Arundel*, *Warwick*, *Derby*, and *Nottingham*, and others of the highest Quality and Interest, who were too powerful to be destroy'd without the Parliament agreed to it, or the Cabal had a Force Superiour to theirs. Wherefore being baulk'd as to that, *The Tryal*, says my Author, *was then made to pack a Parliament, by contriving Elections as the King should appoint.* Which they could not effect; and despairing of their pack'd Majority, the only recourse they could have, was to the Judges, who were summon'd to *Nottingham*, to give an Answer to several Queries put to them by the Ministers. And by their wicked abuse of the Law, one cann't but rejoice in

in the great Care his late Majesty, and our present Sovereign the Queen, have taken to fill the Courts of *Westminster-Hall* with Magistrates, whom no Minister will ever be able to manage contrary to law, and whose Uprightness and Integrity are unquestionable: For in all bad times ill Judges have been found ready to subject the Laws to the Pleasure of the Court. Did not a Set of them declare Ship-Money to be Legal in the Reign of *Charles I*? And another Set pronounce the Dispensing Power to be the same in that of King *James II*. But these Judges, in complacency to the Earl of *Oxford* and his Faction, gave their Opinions, That every thing that had been done against the King's Favourites was High-Treason. What Sir *Robert Howard* writes on this Occasion is worth repeating, as shewing how in all times wicked Lawyers have sacrific'd their Learning and Honesty to their Interest, and made the Will of the Prince to be the Measure of Justice. There was one thing also very remarkable, says that noble Author, that the Lawyers, who in former Parliaments gave their Advice and Opinions for the Proceedings against the Ministers, being afterwards, when the Power turn'd to the King, ask'd, Whether by Law the King could not disannul the Proceedings of that Parliament? Readily recanting their former Opinions, answer'd, That he might; the King being above the Law: A Maxim very much us'd in the late times, and must be always when Arbitrary Power is design'd. The Judges were very clear in the Points they were to discuss; for they determin'd all to be Treason, and the Offenders worthy the Death of Traitors; tho' by this bold Opinion, the Parliament were the Traitors, and the Statute-Law the Treason. They declar'd that Parliaments could not proceed upon any Business, but such

such as the King propos'd and limited by Articles. Nor accuse any of the King's Ministers, without incurring the Guilt and Penalty of High-Treason. Thus had this faithful Minister, this able and honest Politician, who acted by secret and sinister Contrivances, at once overturn'd the Constitution, and destroy'd the Liberties of *England*, to secure himself and Associates from the Punishment the Law threaten'd them with.

The King looking upon the Opinions of the Judges as Authentick, presum'd the Lords, his Favourites hated, were convicted Persons, without farther Tryal: And order'd their Estates to be confiscated, resolving to execute the Sentence of Traytors on them, as soon as he could get them within his Power. He rais'd Soldiers, and commanded the Earl of *Northumberland* to Arrest the Earl of *Arundel*; but the latter had so fortify'd himself in his Castle of *Rygate* in *Surrey*, that the King's Men were forc'd to leave him where they found him. Things were come now to that extremity, that it seem'd impossible to avoid a Civil War: But the discontented Lords, to prevent Bloodshed, prevail'd with the Bishop of *London*, a Prelate of an excellent Temper, to intercede with the King in their behalf, and that they might be restor'd to his Favour. The Bishop perform'd this Office with his best Skill and Zeal, and so wrought upon the King, that he inclin'd to a more happy Temper. But the Chancellor, (*Who, says Sir Robert, hated all Peace and Justice, by which he knew he was to have little Benefit; nor could be be probably safe, longer than while he kept his King in Danger*) quickly turn'd him aside from all Thoughts of Moderation and Clemency: Upon which the Bishop told him, 'Twas not the Service of his Prince that guided him, but his own

own violent Ambition; and that rather than the Lords should not be destroy'd, he would involve the Nation in Ruin. Adding, It was easie for such abject Spirits as his to raise Tumults, which must be ended by the Destruction of the Bravest. Nor was he fit to give Advice, who was the Chief Incendiary, and made a Party by his Condemnation. The King was so angry to see his Favourite so roughly handled, that he commanded the Bishop out of his sight. The Lords finding there was no Security for them but in Resistance, take Arms. The Duke of Gloucester, the Earls of Arundel, Warwick, Nottingham, and Derby, rais'd Forces, and met at Haringbay-Park near Highgate, with such a Power as startled the King and his Favourites. And now the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Bishop of Ely, are sent from Court to the Lords, who for Peace sake agree to lay their Complaints in a dutiful manner before the King at Westminster: But they first oblig'd the Bishop of Ely, whom they knew to be a Man of Honour, to promise to give them notice, if there was any Danger design'd them. And their Jealousie was not ill-grounded, for Oxford had engag'd some treacherous Aldermen of London in his Party, Men who would stick at nothing to carry their Point: Men of small Estates, and profligate Lives, who had no Interest in the City, but as they were of the Favourites Faction, and could not preserve it but by the wicked Means it was acquir'd, the betraying the Liberty of their Fellow-Subjects.

These Men laid an Ambush at the Mews, to sieze the Lords as they came to the King; of which they having Intelligence from the Bishop of Ely, fail'd to come. The King wondering at it, ask'd the Bishop the Reason; who boldly answer'd, The Lords durst not trust him, and had discover'd

discover'd the Trap laid for them: Of which the King seem'd wholly ignorant, and order'd the Sheriffs to search the *Mews*, and kill or seize all they found conceal'd there. The Sheriffs obey'd his Orders, search'd, but found no Body; for tho' the Fact was true, the Place was mistaken; Sir Richard Bramber, and Sir Thomas Trivet, having secretly assembled arm'd Men at *Westminster*, and finding their Plot discover'd, they as secretly convey'd them away again. It was thought that *Oxford* and *Suffolk* apprehended the Action too vile to trust the King with it, tho' they doubted not to get him to approve of it afterwards. *Nor has this been an unusual Method*, says my Author, *of powerful Ministers and Favourites to contrive Mischiefs for their Prince to approve.* A Prince that is wholly led by such, and wrap'd up in their desperate Counsels and Interest, may scruple at a thing being done, that he cannot when 'tis effected: One is but a Difference in Opinion, the other is a Desertion of his Party; he may be free in the first, but too much involve'd to be at liberty in the latter. Whether the King knew of this Treason or not, the Truth of it was not question'd; and the Fraud, Revenge and Cruelty, of the Earl of *Oxford's* Nature, made it the more credible.

Far be it from me to affront the Order of the Priesthood; for which, when 'tis not dishonour'd by those that are of it, no Man has a greater Reverence: Yet one cannot, without erring against the truth of History, omit observing, how often Men of that Sacred Function have dipt themselves deep in the Guilt of Arbitrary Princes. And at this time the Archbishop of *York* declar'd against all peaceful and moderate Counsels, highly exalting the Royal Power, and telling his Prince, *That Occasion was now offer'd to shew himself*

self a King indeed; by cutting off all the Lords who oppos'd his Tyrannical Government. How much honester was the Advice of Sir Hugh Linn, a blunt old Cavalier, who follow'd the Court: The King asking him jocularly, *What was to be done?* Sir Hugh swore, *Blood and Wounds, let us charge home, and kill every Mother's Son, and so we shall make quick dispatch of the best Friends you have in England.* Which honest Roughness of this old Soldier, 'tis said, determin'd the King more to mild Methods, than any grave Counsels of his Bishops.

At last, upon new Faith and Security, the Lords came to the King at Westminster, but with so strong a Guard, that they did not appear like Men who came to submit or to Petition: And they, in his Presence, challeng'd Robert, Earl of Oxford, Duke of Ireland, the Earl of Suffolk, the Archbishop of York, and the Chief Justice Tresilian, as Traytors. The King at that time, when his Favourites could not speak, spoke like himself, a King; and with equal Temper and Reason shew'd the Lords, that if all were true they alledg'd, they had not taken the proper way to seek for Justice by a shew of Rebellion, and give that Opportunity to the licentious Multitude, which perhaps might prove difficult to take again from them. Thus, after having gently laid before them the more proper Way for what they desir'd, he rais'd them from their Knees, and retir'd with them. All this while Oxford and the Favourites kept out of the way; apprehending, as justly they might, the Danger of such powerful and enrag'd Enemies. The King entertain'd the Lords with Wine and other Refreshments, and all things were referr'd to the Determination of a Free Parliament, a Representative Chosen by the unanimous Voice of

the People, impatient for Redress of Grievances, not influenc'd by Factious Riots, nor a Sele~~Q~~ Majority, procur'd by Favourites, which *Oxford* knew would happen, and resolv'd not to venture his Fortune on the severe Judgment of Truth and Justice.

Some are of Opinion, the King himself only temporiz'd and affected Moderation outwardly, while he in secret suffer'd *De Vere* and his Ministers to take other Measures more agreeable to their Notions of Unlimited Monarchy, of Subjection without Bounds, and Obedience without Reserve; not only to the Prince, but his Ministers. The Lords did not so entirely confide in the King's Royal Word, as to disperse their Forces, which they kept together to see how it would be perform'd; especially hearing *Oxford* had left the Court, and was raising Men in *Wales* and *Cheshire*, to enable the King to break his Promise, and protect him in Defiance of them all. Tis believ'd the King conniv'd at his Escape; and tis reported, he stole away in Disguise, with a Bow and Quiver at his Back, in the Habit of a Servant, with Five more in his Company in the same Accoutrements. Some write, that he fled beyond Sea, and afterwards landed with Forces in *England*. Others, That he got into *Cheshire* and *Wales*, which Parts were most devoted to King *Richard*'s Interest, and there rais'd an Army, with which, had he understood Fighting in the Field, as well as Tricking in a Court, he might have been hard enough for all his Enemies. The Lords hearing of his Strength, siez'd all the Passes to *London*, and dispatch'd the Earl of *Derby* (afterwards *Henry IV.*) with sufficient Forces to give him Battle. The Earl having made himself Master of the Post of *Radcot-Bridge* in *Oxfordshire*,

De Vere's March was stopt, and soon after the Earl attack'd him at three Places. The Earl's Forces were spirited with the Justice of their Cause ; the Duke's rather a mutinous Rabble, than a regular Army ; and had not Sir *Thomas Mullineux*, Constable of *Chester*, and a Creature of the Favourites, perswaded him that the Earl of *Derby*'s Forces were not all come up, and himself but a mean unexperienc'd General, *Oxford* would have fled without Fighting : Encourag'd by that desperate Knight, he display'd the King's Banner, and advanc'd in Person to the Bridge, attempting to force it : A Battle ensu'd upon this, which was of very short Duration ; for *Oxford*'s Men, in Imitation of their General, thought of flying more than fighting ; himself alighting off his Horse, mounted on a swifter, to secure his Retreat ; but finding himself surrounded by the Duke of *Gloucester* on one Hand, and the Earl of *Derby* on the other, he quitted his Army, and took the River *Iris*, which he swam, leaving his Horse in the midst of the Stream, and gaining the other side without it. His Soldiers seeing this, threw down their Arms, and submitted : Sir *Thomas Mullineux* flying, was met and slain by Sir *Thomas Mortimer*, his Men were disarm'd and sent home ; only the better sort of them remain'd in the Service of the Earl of *Derby*, who commanded that none that yielded should be ill us'd, either in Action or Word. For those who fight for their Country are never insolent on Success. Men that have an ill Cause, and despair of maintaining it long, are always fond of shewing their short-liv'd Mastery, and put it to as bad Uses as they can. Some Historians place this Action not at *Radcot*-Bridge, but at *Babbelake* near *Burford* ; the Circumstances too are a little vary'd

put all agree in the Earl of Oxford's Cowardice and Flight. On which my noble Author again says: *He that was so bold in Counsel, shew'd want of Courage when 'twas most needful, in Action; and fled himself before the Fight was scarce begun.* Among many things taken of his, in one of his Trunks were found Letters from the King, *To hasten his coming to London with what Power he could make, where the King would be ready to share Fortunes with him.* But the time was come, that *De Vere* was to pay dearly for the Honours and Pleasures of his former Life; and not daring to trust himself to the impotent Favour of his Master, he escap'd in Disguise by Night, first into *Scotland*, then into *Flanders*, and lastly into *France*.

What favour'd his Escape was, a Report that he was slain; for his Arms, Armour and Horse being taken, 'twas generally believ'd he fell in the Battle, or was drown'd in the River: And, as it often happens in such Uncertainties, some reported they saw him perish, describing the very manner of it: The belief of it prevailing, 'twas no hard matter for him to continue his Flight in Disguise, as has been already mention'd.

The Lords marching with their victorious Troops to *London*, the King thought fit to comply with them for the present, and call a Parliament, wherein *Robert, Earl of Oxford, &c.* was summon'd to appear and answer to certain Articles of High-Treason, exhibited against him by the Duke of *Gloucester* and other Peers. But this was matter of Form only; for they knew he would not trust himself among them, accountable as he was for so many Treasons and Crimes; so he was banish'd, and all his Lands Confiscated, except those, as fore-seeing a Storm and a Day of Reckoning, he had secur'd by *Entail*. His Banishment,

ment, Attainer, and Outlawry, were confirm'd by Act of Parliament. He now began to feel the Misfortunes of those fal'n Favourites who rose to Power, and maintain'd it by Fraud and Oppression. He was universally neglected and despis'd. In which forlorn Condition he wander'd from Place to Place, till at last he was kill'd by a wild Boar, near *Louvain* in *Flanders*, where he had liv'd some time in the last Poverty and Distress: His Fall being as much un pity'd as his Rise was undeserv'd. Such was his End in the 32d Year of his Age, the 15th of King *Richard*, A. D. 1393.

As to his Character, tho' his Actions speak it sufficiently, yet I shall add what Sir *Robert Howard* says of it, in his Reflections so often quoted.

It is a Wonder, that such a Man should ever get the Ascendant over a Prince: A Man that was profuse of what he could get; and got it as willingly by the Spoils of others, as by more justifiable Ways. He was unfit for Peace by his turbulent Nature, and wanted Courage to be troublesome in War. In Peace he was furious, in War calm; never quiet but when afraid, at all other times intemperate; when he was not designing Mischief, his Courage fail'd him; he never seem'd good, but when necessity binder'd him from being bad; he had no Fits of a Disease, but liv'd in a continu'd Leprosy.

But we have read of other Precedents, how worthless Men have scrud'd themselves into Princes Favours, by such Flatteries that generous Tempers could not creep to. For ill Men study the Nature of Princes, good Men their Interest: And that which is most pleasant sooner prevails, than that which is most useful.

I should here close my History, the Scene being shut with the Death of *De Vere*; but having Spoken so much of *De la Poole* the Chancellor, I shall also insert his Character as 'tis given by *Trussell*.



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